



JOHN TRUMBULL, DEL.

WM. MILLER, SC.

DEATH OF GENL. WARREN AT THE BATTLE OF BUNKER'S HILL, 17th JUNE, 1775.

FROM THE ORIGINAL PRELIMINARY SKETCH IN INDIA INK, IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. E. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN, CONN.

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JOHN TRUMBULL.

BY

JOHN DURAND.

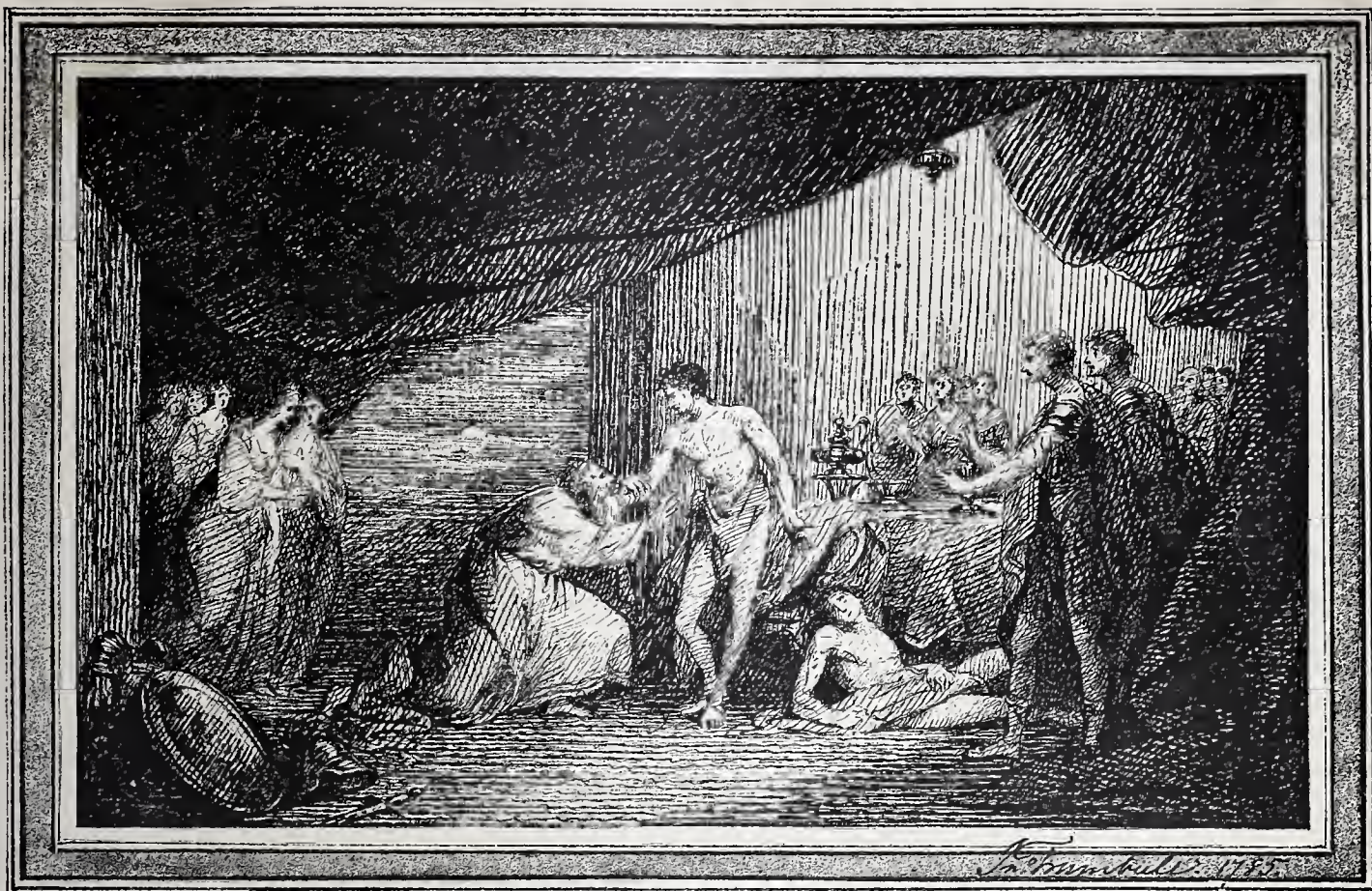
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PRIAM IN THE TENT OF ACHILLES.

FROM THE ORIGINAL SKETCH BY TRUMBULL, IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

JOHN TRUMBULL.

FIRST ARTICLE.

JOHN TRUMBULL, the subject of this article, was born in Lebanon, Connecticut, June 6th, 1756. He records himself as of Scottish origin on his father's side, and of Puritan origin on his mother's. The father of Trumbull's mother, the Rev. John Robinson, was a man of strong will, which quality characterized both Trumbull's mother and himself. It is related of him, that, on being excommunicated for independent opinions, he refused to recognize the sentence, and, on the first Sabbath following its promulgation on which the communion was administered, took his own bread and wine to church, and celebrated the rite by himself.

Young Trumbull early showed a taste for drawing. He had two sisters, Faith and Mary, much older than himself, who had learned embroidery, a young lady's artistic accomplishment in those days, and whose samplers, together with "two heads and a landscape," painted by Miss Faith, hung on the walls of the sitting-room in their father's house. These designs their young brother imitated by scrawling them on the "nicely sanded floor," carpets being then unknown in Lebanon. He had also other tastes. "At the age of twelve," he says in his Memoirs, "I had read Eutropius, Cornelius Nepos, Virgil, Cicero, Horace, and Juvenal, in Latin, the Testament and Homer's *Iliad*, in Greek, and was thoroughly versed in geography, ancient and modern." At Harvard College, where he was graduated at seventeen, he added to his intellectual resources a knowledge of French, obtained from Père Robichaud, an exile, while at the same time he gratified his love of art by ransacking the College library for books on that subject. *Jesuit's Perspective made Easy*, by Brooke Taylor, and Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*,

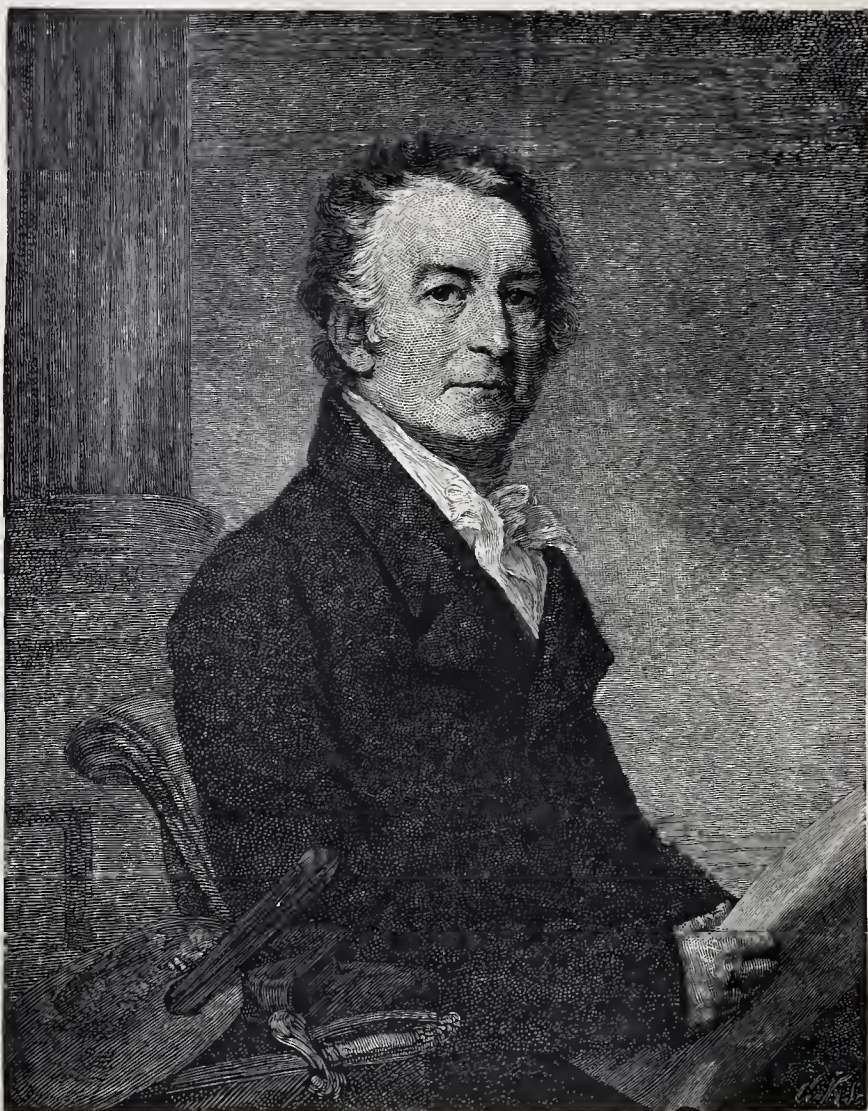
seem to have been the most important works on the theory of art that fell into his hands, while historical authorities like Rollin familiarized him with the names and works of Pheidias, Praxiteles, Zeuxis, and Apelles. Besides the books he read, a few fine engravings, a set of Piranesi's drawings of Roman ruins, a call on John Singleton Copley, "dressed in fine maroon cloth, with gilt buttons," who was then a leading portrait-painter in Boston, and, above all, a sight of his works, determined young Trumbull to become a painter. Such were the stimulants to his genius. What more could be expected in those Colonial times? People's minds were absorbed with their own occupations. If they had time or thought for other matters, they were given to religion or politics. The highest aim of any one in the community was self-support, while proof of ability consisted in making one's self useful in church affairs or active at a town meeting. The only lucrative pursuits were commerce and the law. But there was no such thing as leisure or capital with which to indulge refining tastes. Apart from duty or business, other tastes, indeed, were held to be almost criminal. Opinions were rigid; free speculation and criticism were not intellectual habits; emotional life and that social intercourse growing out of natural and spontaneous sympathies, so indispensable for enlisting minds in the service of the ideal, were wholly wanting. The emotions on which art depends could not develop under theories which held that leisure and diversion were idleness, and emotion sinful. And yet the instinct for art was not dead; it is an instinct that can no more be stifled by neglect, opprobrium, and conventional standards of aspiration, than the religious sentiment can be killed out by persecution. People who had money to spend in gratification of their fancies did spend it for one or more portraits of those near and dear to them, or of men in public whom they admired. This was the sole manifestation of art feeling. Smybert, introduced to the New World by Dean Berkeley, "painted the magistrates and divines of New England and New York," while Copley subsequently painted others, and probably made portraiture fashionable.

The obstacles young Trumbull encountered in following his natural bent, and which, indeed, beset him throughout his career, not only furnish important biographical details, but fully illustrate the spirit of the age in relation to art. Jonathan Trumbull, father of Colonel Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut during the Revolutionary war, and the "Brother Jonathan" of Washington, was a man of sense. He knew that art was an exotic in this country, and was unwilling to see his son the victim of an unproductive pursuit. He desired to have him a lawyer, his mother wished him to become a clergyman, while other friends proposed commercial undertakings to him; but to all of these well-meant suggestions he turned a deaf ear. "My father again urged the law," says Trumbull, in his Memoirs. "My reply was, that, so far as I understood the question, law was rendered necessary by the vices of mankind,—that I had seen too much of them. In short, I pined for the arts, and again entered into an elaborate defence of my predilection, dwelling on the honors paid to artists in the glorious days of Greece and Athens. 'Give me leave to say,' replied my father, 'that you appear to have overlooked, or forgotten, one very important point in your case.' 'Pray, sir,' I rejoined, 'what is that?' 'You appear to forget, sir, that *Connecticut is not Athens*,'—and with this pithy remark he bowed and withdrew, and nevermore opened his lips on the subject." A further sign of his father's good sense is seen in his not interfering with his son's projects, but doing all he could to aid them when these became inevitable. The probability is that "Brother Jonathan" was proud of his son, as he had good reason to be, on account of his attainments, as well as for his firmness of character.

But all further discussion of pursuit in life was put an end to by the outbreak of the Revolutionary war. Young Trumbull now entered the military service of his country, in which he remained two years. In April, 1775, he was made Adjutant of the First Connecticut Regiment, and in August of that year, an Aid to General Washington, with the rank of Colonel. He witnessed the battle of Bunker Hill, took part in operations in Northern New York, and finally resigned his commission in 1777, on account of its not having been dated in accordance with

his services. There was nothing for him to do but to resume painting. Returning to Boston, he occupied a studio built by Smybert, in which he made copies of various pictures after Van Dyck, Poussin, and Raphael, besides painting a few portraits. Up to this time his studies had consisted of copying the designs of engravings, to which he added color as he imagined it, while he at the same time composed subjects of his own, including landscapes and figures, now known as genre art, amounting in all — portraits, copies, and original productions of an ambitious sort — to sixty-eight works, before he had “received any instruction other than was obtained from books.” Some of these paintings are odd enough, but they nevertheless show the young painter’s talent. One of them, *Belisarius*, now in the possession of Professor Stickney, in New York, is, as Trumbull himself calls it, “good,” considering the circumstances under which it was painted. Another canvas, or rather piece of cloth, “a small whole-length” of his brother David “standing in a landscape,” of which the trees are painted in blue color, owing to the impossibility of getting a proper supply of paint, is a quaint performance; it betokens energy, however, and is illustrative of his early ability and perseverance under difficulties. Portraits of his father and mother, in the possession of Professor Silliman, at New Haven, are also of this period.

While thus engaged (1778), a plan was formed for the recovery of Rhode Island from the British. Colonel Trumbull offered his services to General Sullivan, as Aide-de-Camp, and they were accepted. The war would often disturb him, — “the sound of a drum frequently called an involuntary tear to my eye,” — and he was glad of an opportunity to distinguish himself. The enterprise ended honorably for Colonel Trumbull, but with an illness which forced him again to lay down the sword. This was of short duration, and on his recovery he resumed the brush. “My friends, however, were not satisfied with my pursuit, and at length succeeded in persuading me to undertake the management of a considerable speculation, which required a voyage to Europe, and promised (upon paper) good results.” To the experience of the soldier and the artist he was now to add that of a merchant. The consolation he experienced for thus complying with the wishes of his friends was found in the road being paved for a study of art abroad, in case the mercantile project failed, which, fortunately for him, happened to be the case. Trumbull sailed from New London for France in the spring of 1780, and landed at Nantes, after a voyage of about five weeks. There bad news met him: “Charleston, in South Carolina, was



PORTRAIT OF COLONEL JOHN TRUMBULL.

PAINTED BY WALDO AND JEWETT. — ENGRAVED BY G. KRUELL.

THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

taken, and the British were overrunning the Southern States almost without opposition. This news was a *coup de grâce* to my commercial projects, for my funds consisted in public securities of Congress, the value of which was annihilated by adversity." Before leaving America, Trumbull had been advised by a Mr. Temple, Consul-General of Great Britain in New York previous to the commencement of hostilities, and who, married to an American lady, was regarded as a neutral, to go to London to study art. This gentleman, moreover, as he was a man of influence in England, relieved him of any fears of being molested there on account of his having been a rebel officer. Accordingly, he proceeded at once to Paris, where he found Dr. Franklin, who gave him a letter to Benjamin West, in London, then in high favor with the Court and King, and to whom he soon delivered it. West received Trumbull kindly, and set him to work. He began with copying West's copy of Raphael's *Madonna della Seggiola*, and Gilbert Stuart, then also a pupil of West, showed him how to mix and apply his colors. Perhaps this initiation into the mysteries of the palette was more useful to him than West's, for Stuart's instinct for color must have been worth more as a guide than any of their master's precepts. West was pleased with the copy. He pronounced Trumbull "intended for a painter," and "with this stimulant I devoted myself to art."

Trumbull, however, was not to remain tranquilly at work. About this time news arrived of the capture and death of Major André, which produced great excitement against Americans in England. He states in his Memoirs that the strongest feeling against him came from "Loyalists," that is to say, some of his own countrymen, "who had carefully watched my conduct from the day of my arrival, and now thought themselves certain of putting an end to my unintelligible security and protection." Through the agency of one of these, Sir Benjamin Thompson, afterwards Count Rumford, Trumbull was arrested and incarcerated. West, Copley, Charles James Fox, and other prominent men, interested themselves in the case, and finally, after an imprisonment of seven months, during which he copied a Correggio from a copy made by West (now in New Haven), he was released. His freedom was owing to the clemency and magnanimity of George III., through the good offices of Edmund Burke, on West and Copley becoming surety for him, coupled with the condition of leaving the kingdom in thirty days. After a short journey on the Continent, and a longer one on the sea, he reached his native land at the end of the year. There is no doubt that his bearing and language on being examined after his arrest had an effect in relation to his freedom. "I am an American. My name is Trumbull. I am a son of him whom you call the rebel Governor of Connecticut. I have served in the rebel American army. I have had the honor of being an Aide-de-Camp to him whom you call the rebel General Washington. These two always have in their power a greater number of your friends prisoners than you have of theirs. . . . I am entirely in your power; treat me as you please, always remembering that as I may be treated so will your friends in America be treated by mine."

Trumbull arrived home in January, 1782. But he was not yet sure of becoming an artist. For two years he was engaged in what he calls desultory pursuits. His brother was Commissary for the army on the North River in New York during the winter of 1782-83, and Trumbull assisted him, residing with the army to see that all the details of contracts were faithfully executed. Here he had much intercourse with Washington. At length peace was declared. The last effort Governor Trumbull made to dissuade his son from following the profession of an artist, in which he made his "pithy reply" above mentioned, occurred at this time. But Trumbull's mind was made up: his experience abroad had probably clenched the nail, and he accordingly returned to Europe, in 1784, never again to entertain doubts about his life's pursuit.

Trumbull, now twenty-eight years old, established himself in London, and applied himself closely to study. Fully to appreciate his subsequent works, their originality both in execution and treatment, we must know something of the method of art study then in vogue. This method may be characterized as the "old master" method. It consisted of drawing from the



THE BATTLE OF PRINCETON.

PHOTOTYPIC REDUCTION OF A SKETCH BY JOHN TRUMBULL. THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. E. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

antique, and of copying pictures executed by the old masters, on the theory that such a course of study enabled a pupil to obtain proper notions of color and design, as well as superior conceptions of beauty and of the ideal. This theory in England was held to be orthodox. The practice of the Renaissance artists, together with a study of the forms of Greek art, was the right thing: natural currents of feeling, coupled with direct study of nature, through which feeling expressed itself, was not regarded as the true source of artistic development. Certain literary authorities, moreover, with minds more affected by erudition than by natural sensibility, better judges of the old wine of art than of the good qualities of the new, established a standard of criticism for the public and amateurs, until it got to be the fashion to consider all art that was not "high art" as not worth looking at. Such a theory suited aristocratic tastes. Hogarth was held to be vulgar, somewhat like Molière in the time of Louis XIV.; while Richard Wilson, who painted as admirable landscapes as the world has seen, had to paint signs, and finally serve as librarian in the Royal Academy, to keep himself alive. Winckelmann translated the Greek sentiment for art into certain lines and curves, which constituted ideal beauty, while Lessing held that the Greeks were averse to painful emotions in art, through an æsthetic instinct for repose. Sir Joshua Reynolds's lectures are full of references to the way in which the old masters managed lights, shadows, folds of drapery, balance of composition, and other technical details. "I would chiefly recommend," he says, "an implicit obedience to the *Rules of Art*, as established by the practice of the great masters, . . . perfect and infallible guides, subjects for imitation, not for criticism." An appeal to nature for inspiration and expression, independently of such authorities, was, consequently, never thought of. The nature studied in those days consisted of a nude Academy model, serving as guide both for flesh and anatomy, while drawing was confined to casts of the antique. The style produced by this method of study is very properly known as the "Academic" or "Grand" style. Trumbull was "brought up," as the saying is, according to this old master method. Fortunately for him, as well as for Washington Allston, who pursued art under the same influences and at the same time, but who was less emancipated from its thralldom, they had genius, and were original in spite of the method. The drawings of Academy models which we reproduce show to some extent Trumbull's capacity to invest such subjects with ideal interest.

Methods and styles, indeed, become tyrannical in all epochs; they mystify alike artists, critics, and the public. Analogous fashions of our day help to make this point clearer. About thirty years ago, Decamps, Delacroix, and Couture, French artists of genius, so emphasized color in their compositions as to make color appear the chief excellence of artistic work. A crowd of imitators have followed the style of one or the other of these masters, and formed a "school," until "fine color," in inverse proportion to fine thought and delicate perceptions, has become the standard and criterion of excellence. Literature furnishes similar examples of the same tyranny. Those who are familiar with literary styles may comprehend this educational process in art, by supposing that a book or an editorial written in the brilliant language of Macaulay is good on that account, or, to come nearer home, that the numerous imitators of Emerson ever made a good idea better or a cheap thought more valuable by the sententious phraseology of the "sage of Concord." It is owing to this tyranny of style that Trumbull, Stuart, Allston, Vanderlyn, Sully, Cole, Mount, and the others who founded our American school, are now overlooked, and the imitators of foreign artists crowned with success.

To return to Colonel Trumbull. We now reach the important period of his artistic career, extending from 1789 to 1794,—that in which his mind worked with the greatest freedom, in which his enthusiasm was at its highest pitch, and his revenue equal to his necessities. His best creative work, the most original and the most natural, that by which his capacity is tested, belongs to this period. The sanction of his calling appears in the following extract from a letter written to Jefferson from London, June 11, 1789:—"The greatest motive I had or have for engaging in or continuing my pursuit of painting has been the wish of commemorating the



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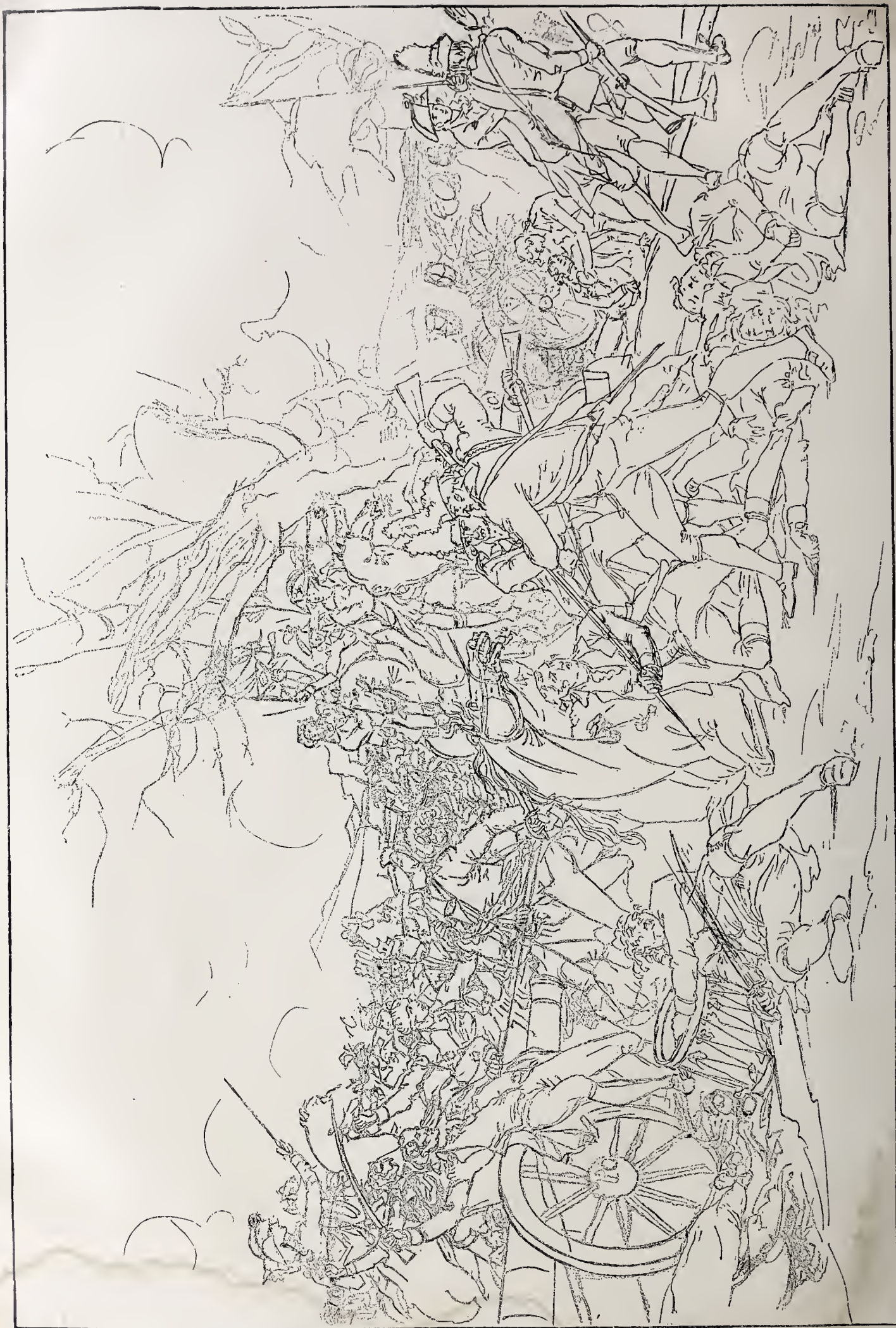
ACADEMICAL STUDY.

CHAS. METTALIS, FAC-SIM

great events of our country's revolution. I am fully sensible that the profession, as it is generally practised, is frivolous, little useful to society, and unworthy a man who has talents for more serious pursuits. But to preserve and diffuse the memory of the noblest series of actions which have ever presented themselves in the history of man" is sufficient warrant for it. There is something of a Puritan view of the profession in this extract, but we may let that pass, considering Colonel Trumbull's experiences. He now set to work on national themes. Previous to doing so, however, he tried his hand in the "grand style." He made sketches like that of the *Deluge*, which he afterwards painted when near eighty, supposing that it was a fresh conception; and he produced, in color, *Priam returning to his Family with the Dead Body of Hector*, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In this latter picture the figures are small and somewhat characteristic of his later work. The next work he produced is, by his own account, a soldier of the King's Horse Guards, for which one of Mr. West's hired models, who belonged to that corps, furnished person, costume, and horse, and which indicates a resort to nature and a style of his own.

Trumbull's representative works are the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, the *Death of Montgomery*, the *Sortie from Gibraltar*, the *Surrender of Cornwallis*, and the *Declaration of Independence*, all finished, or nearly so, before 1795. Added to these are a series of miniature portraits, a few portraits of the size of life, and two full-length portraits, *Washington* and *Alexander Hamilton*, executed likewise in this period.

The *Battle of Bunker Hill* was his first great effort. This picture represents the moment of British success, but the chief incident in it is the death of General Warren. Trumbull's description of the finished picture, which I abbreviate, states the artistic problem he had to work out. The principal group represents General Warren expiring. A soldier on his knees supports him, and with one hand wards off the bayonet of a British grenadier, who, in the heat and fury natural at such a moment, aims to revenge the death of a favorite officer, Colonel Abercrombie, who has just fallen at his feet. Colonel Small, another British officer, who had been intimately connected with General Warren before hostilities commenced, saw him fall, and flew to save him. He is represented seizing the musket of the grenadier to prevent the fatal blow. Near him, several Americans persist in an obstinate and desperate, but fruitless resistance. General Putnam, on the extreme left, is seen ordering the retreat of the American forces. Behind Colonel Small is seen Colonel Pitcairn, of the British marines, mortally wounded, and falling in the arms of his son. Under the feet of Colonel Small lies the dead body of Colonel Abercrombie. Generals Howe and Clinton, of the British forces, are seen beyond. On the right of the picture, relieving against the distant landscape, is seen a young American, wounded in the sword hand, who, as he retires from the field, attended by a negro, hesitates about remaining to save the life of his general. Variety of character, distinct personalities, each individual animated with a different impulse, every countenance expressing truthfully and powerfully the sentiment peculiar to each, the rush of an attacking force driving back through superior discipline a motley but equally courageous crowd of defenders, all blended together without confusion in the tumult and excitement of war, show a rare command of artistic resources and great dramatic ability. The leading idea is one of humanity,—the attempt of a British officer, Colonel Small, to save the life of General Warren, with whom he had been on friendly terms before war became inevitable. This incident, the energetic action of General Putnam on the left, ordering a retreat of the American forces, the sympathetic, eager expression of the old soldier who is supporting General Warren on his knees, and, lastly, the pallid features of the dying hero, form special examples of Colonel Trumbull's pictorial skill. This is the ideal he aimed at, an ideal which makes modern fine art explicable on the same theory as ancient art: while the latter displays a limited range of emotion, the former gives with equal fidelity to nature a series of emotions which were never dreamt of by the ancients. As to composition, which term, applied to plastic art, means the logical value and disposition of forms to convey



THE BATTLE OF PRINCETON.

PHOTOTYPIC REDUCTION OF A SKETCH BY JOHN TRUMBULL. THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. D. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

ideas, the *Battle of Bunker Hill* is as masterly and original as any work of a similar kind extant. Its color is good, because locally true and harmonious. If ever "glaring," as an authority which is quoted further on has stated, time has removed that discord. Above all, one has to admire the remarkable miniature heads, a distinctive branch of Trumbull's skill, and which alone make his art unique. The young American on the right, in the foreground of the picture, appears a little theatrical in pose,



ACADEMICAL STUDY BY TRUMBULL.

DRAWN BY CHARLES METTAIS. — FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

and somewhat romantic in costume and features, which is the only criticism I can offer. I give way to a verdict of Goethe, in a letter to Schiller, Aug. 30, 1797. Goethe saw the picture in the hands of Müller, who engraved it, and says: "I found Prof. Müller . . . busy with the death of a general, and that an American,—a young man who fell at Bunker Hill. The picture is by an American, Trumbull, and has merits of the artist and faults of the amateur. The merits are very characteristic,—admirably handled portrait faces; the faults,—disproportion between the different bodies and between their parts. It is composed relatively to the subject right well, and, for a picture in which there must be so many red uniforms, is very judiciously colored. Yet at first view it makes a glaring impression, until one gets reconciled to it on account of its merits." The sketch of the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, which is here reproduced, is one of his trial efforts of composition for this picture, and differs materially from the painting. As finally painted and described, it is universally known by Müller's engraving and other less meritorious reproductions.

Along with this picture Trumbull painted the *Death of Montgomery*, which is equally successful. Both pictures were painted in West's studio. In the *Death of Montgomery* "that part of the scene is chosen when General Montgomery commanded in person, and that moment when, by his unfortunate death, the plan of attack was entirely disconcerted. . . . The principal group represents the death of General Montgomery, who, together with his two aides-de-camp,

Major McPherson and Captain Cheesman, fell by a discharge of grape-shot. The General is represented as expiring, supported by two officers and surrounded by others, among whom is Colonel Campbell, on whom the command devolved, and by whose order a retreat was immediately begun. Grief and surprise mark the countenances of the various characters. The earth covered with snow, trees stripped of their foliage, the desolation of winter, and the gloom of night, heighten the melancholy character of the scene." Dramatic power and truth of expression characterize this composition, as well as the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, while in coloring it is superior. It, too, is well known by the large print by J. Hall.

Trumbull now began other works belonging to this series of national subjects. He painted the portraits of John Adams and others of the signers of the *Declaration of Independence* (1787), studied the composition of the *Surrender of Cornwallis*, and made sketches for the battles of Trenton and of Princeton. Three outline sketches of the latter subject are here reproduced, showing how carefully the artist considered his compositions, before he settled upon their final form. These subjects, however, were set aside for his most important and largest work, the *Sortie from Gibraltar*. Pursuing his studies on English soil, he probably thought that a more ready appreciation of his talent would be secured by painting an English subject, especially as he had "given offence to some extra patriotic people in England" by painting subjects in that country commemorative of the American rebellion. In any event, an Italian artist named Poggi, who was an eyewitness of it, mentioned the incident of the sortie to him, and this so fired his imagination that he at once proceeded to put it on canvas. The main feature of the scene is the death of the Spanish commander, accompanied with a sentiment of humanity on the part of his victorious opponents. "The devoted heroism of the vanquished, the humanity of the victors, the darkness of night illuminated by an extensive conflagration, the hurry and tumult of the troops busy in the work of destruction, the quiet and the calm of the officers, the guiding spirits of the scene, offered unusual contrasts and scope of expression, and all this was embellished by the splendor and variety of military costume." Action, individual character, the proper subordination of inferior to superior truths, coloring,—the success of which is the more remarkable on account of so many red uniforms,—are all conspicuous merits in this picture. Academic training is evident in some of the details, but not to such an extent as to make one less sensible of a freedom from conventional theories and of an original grasp of the subject in all its technical requirements. The picture was exhibited in London, exciting great admiration, and especially from the officers who had taken part in the engagement.

Trumbull painted the *Sortie from Gibraltar* three times. The labor he bestowed on this work shows his method and conscientiousness. The first effort was "a small picture on a cloth fourteen inches by twenty-one, on which I carefully drew and painted my figures from nature." On completing this work, he presented it to Mr. West, in grateful acknowledgment of his liberal instruction. Finding that he had made a mistake in the color of the Spanish uniform, which he supposed to be white and red, he began the subject anew on a canvas twenty by thirty inches, the uniform being painted, as it should have been, blue and scarlet. This picture was purchased by Sir Francis Baring for five hundred guineas. Not long since this picture was in Rome, in the possession of a Mr. McPherson, having been brought there by Lady Ashburton, and exchanged for other works of art. It was sent back to England after the death of Mr. McPherson. Here again "I was not satisfied with the action and expression of my dying Spaniard. He seemed to retain too much strength and energy of action, and a vehement, almost ferocious expression." Accordingly, he repeated the subject once more, and this time on a large scale, nine feet by six, in which picture "I adopted, in some measure," he says, "the action of the Dying Gladiator for that of my Spanish hero. Sir Thomas Lawrence did me the favor to act as model for the head of my dying Spaniard." The *Sortie from Gibraltar*, thus perfected, is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, while the fine engraving by Sharp makes it known elsewhere. The Boston Athenæum possesses the original sketches for



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ACADEMICAL STUDY.

THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. H. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

CHAS. METALS, FAC-SIM.

this picture, presented to it by Colonel Trumbull, including the drawing of Sir Thomas Lawrence above mentioned. It is not known what became of the painting presented to Mr. West. In after years West told Professor Silliman the elder that the *Sortie from Gibraltar* was "one of the great things of the age." To complete the above account of this masterpiece, I give the following note on technical



SKETCH BY TRUMBULL FOR A GROUP IN "PRIAM RETURNING TO HIS FAMILY," ETC.

THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

points, copied from Colonel Trumbull's manuscripts: — "Instead of white, the lights are of Jaune Minérale d'Antheaume (?), Rue d'Enfer, Paris. The universal shadow was Terra di Cassel; in the dark parts of the sky blue-black was used; and Lucas' copal varnish was freely employed throughout. No white was employed in the picture. These were dangerous experiments, but appeared to be successful when I last saw it."

The next work eminently illustrative of Colonel Trumbull's artistic powers, on account of the difficulty of the subject, is the *Declaration of Independence*. To paint an assemblage of forty-eight personages, all in the same costume, each a faithful likeness, and all animated by one stirring idea, with no positive action, without confusion in the grouping, without monotony or feebleness of effect, is no easy task. Whoever studies this work attentively will indorse the opinion of it expressed by Horatio Greenough: — "I admire in this composition the skill with which Trumbull has collected so many portraits in formal session, without theatrical effort in order to enliven it, and without falling into bald insipidity by adherence to trivial fact. These men are earnest, yet full of dignity; they are firm, yet cheerful; they are gentlemen, and you see at a glance that they meant something very serious in pledging their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors." One charm of this work is the series of miniatures it contains. For expression, character, and animation they are unsurpassed. Dunlap—no friend of the artist—vouches for accuracy of likeness, "having known most of the originals." The portraits of Richard Henry Lee, George Clinton, Samuel Adams, Robert Morris, George Clymer (the smallest, and an inimitable head), with those of the group standing before Hancock,—John Adams, Roger Sherman, Robert R. Livingston, Jefferson, and Franklin,—are comparable to the finest limning of Meissonier. Many were painted from life. The portrait of Benjamin Harrison, who died without leaving any portrait of himself, was painted from his son, who told Trumbull that his mother always said that he was the image of his father, a resemblance which was markedly preserved in their handwriting. The rest are copied from authentic portraits. Adams and Jefferson gave him sittings as early as 1788. Trumbull, in 1816, writes to Jefferson: — "Twenty-eight years have elapsed since, under the kind protection of your hospitable roof at

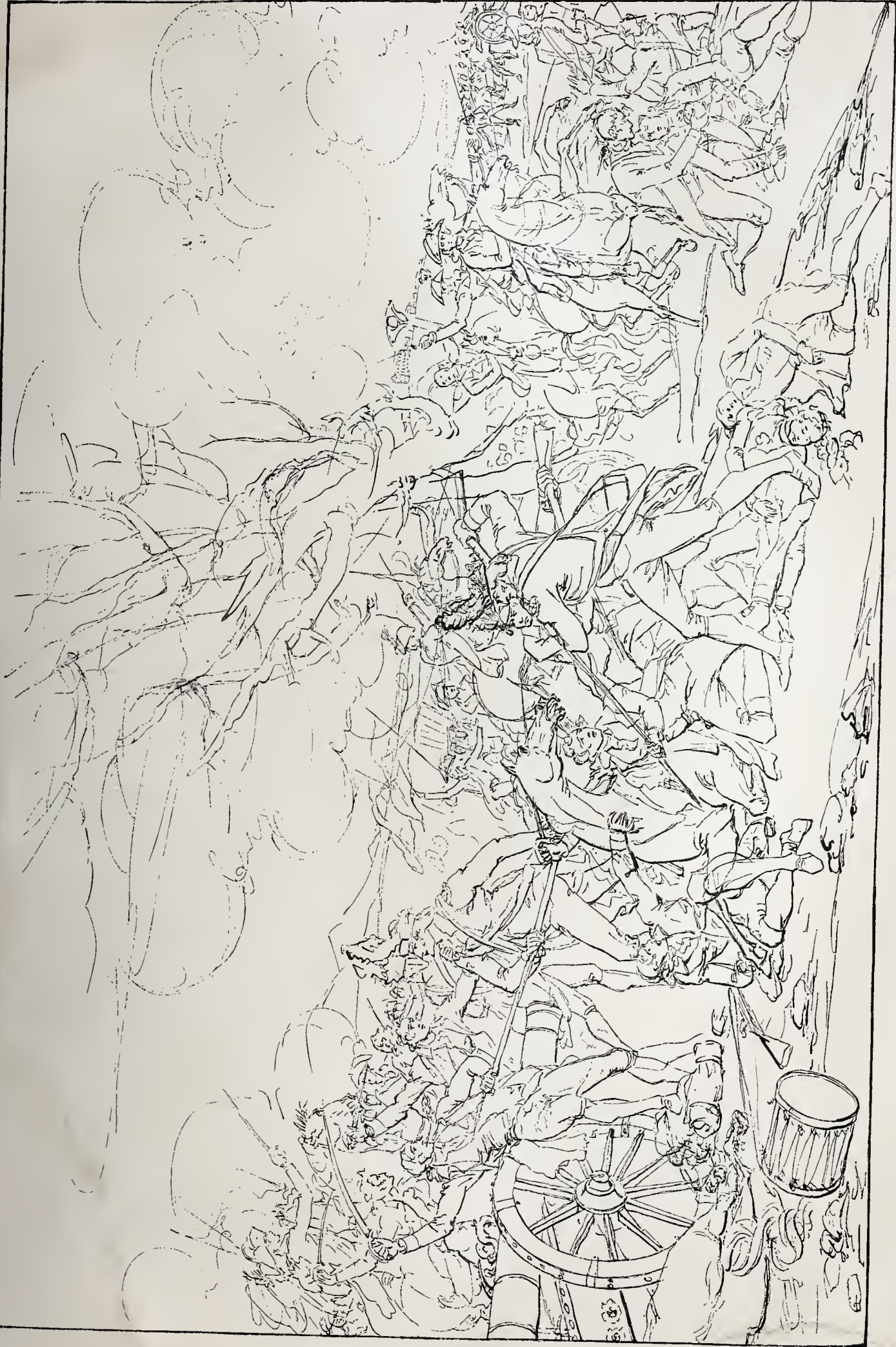
Chaillot [Jefferson being then in Paris], I painted your portrait in my picture of the *Declaration of Independence*, the composition of which had been planned two years before in your library." Others were painted in the United States between 1789 and 1794, except four or five, painted probably as late as 1816, when Trumbull was preparing to have the picture engraved. On comparing the heads of Lynch, Chase, Rush, and Stockton with those above mentioned, the difference in style is so plain as to make it evident, even to an unpractised eye, that the hand had lost its cunning. Thirteen of the signers, of whom he could procure no portraits, are unrepresented. Five persons are introduced into the picture who were not signers, but who took prominent part in the debates on the measure, and who voted on its acceptance.

It has been said that Franklin has a sanctimonious expression. If so, it is owing to the white of the eye not having become "toned down," as artists say, in accordance with the change of hue which time effects with the colors of a painting generally. On receding a few steps from the picture this uncharacteristic expression of Franklin disappears. Criticisms upon this work have been made in relation to awkwardness in the pose of John Adams, the drawing of Jefferson's arm, and the management of light in one or two minor points, which defects, trivial in relation to so much excellence, may be left to those who are curious in such matters. As to John Randolph's famous sarcasm of "shin piece," it merits no remark, except to characterize it as an outburst of malignity, and even treachery, for Randolph, ten years before, had not only warmly commended, but seconded, Trumbull's efforts to preserve his artistic mementos of Revolutionary events. Considering the signal good fortune of so many veritable portraits having been thus brought down to us, conveying such a vivid impression of this great historical incident, to say nothing of the rare skill with which the subject is treated, it is a misfortune that no Congress up to 1816 was sufficiently intelligent to purchase this painting at any price, and have it forever associated with the document the signing of which it commemorates.

The *Surrender of Cornwallis* is of the same order of excellence. The heads of Washington and of General Lincoln are inimitable. Most of the portraits of the French officers were painted from life in Paris in 1787. The *Battle of Princeton* belongs to the artist's late period, very little of it showing his strength. A sketch of this picture, which hangs with the others in the collection at New Haven, probably made in 1787, as above noted, is full of the inspiration of that period. The figures of this sketch, just drawn in and slightly colored, convey the spirit of the scene far better than the finished picture. In *Washington resigning his Commission* a few of the heads—Washington, Colonel Walker, and Colonel Humphreys—belong to the early period. In the *Capture of the Hessians* the same contrast between early and later work is observable, and likewise in the *Surrender of Burgoyne*.

Trumbull's next important productions, belonging to the early period, when he worked with most enthusiasm, are a series of cabinet portraits of distinguished persons of the Revolutionary epoch, forming a part of the collection of his works at New Haven. In these may be found whatever is beautiful and masterly in standard works of portraiture. General Moultrie (in frame No. 33), in modelling, color, and expression, is a masterpiece, equal to any of Stuart's heads on a larger scale, while Rufus Putnam and Jacob Reed (in frame No. 37), General Smallwood, Major Haskell, Colonel Morgan, Judge Benson, and Philip Schuyler (forming group No. 20), are scarcely less striking. Five heads of ladies, Eleanor Custis, Cornelia Schuyler, Mrs. Washington, Sophia Chew, and Harriet Chew (No. 35), delicately drawn and colored, stand every test of fine art in the portrayal of feminine dignity and refinement.

The portrait of General Washington by Trumbull, also in the New Haven collection, must be regarded as a standard portrait of the Father of his Country. No artist saw more of Washington under circumstances so favorable to a study of his person and character, and none was honored by him with more sittings. Trumbull knew Washington at the outbreak of the war, when he was about forty-five, in the prime of life, and he was with him, as we have seen, in 1782 and 1783, at New Windsor, on the North River, and it is said that he painted a portrait



THE BATTLE OF PRINCETON.

PHOTOTYPIC REDUCTION OF A SKETCH BY JOHN TRUMBULL. THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. E. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

of him from memory when he went to England. At all events, in 1790, Washington gave him sittings for two full-length life-size portraits, one in civil costume, now at Charleston, S. C., and the other in military uniform, now at New Haven. Washington, in his diary, records between February 12th and July 13th, 1790, eleven sittings "for Mr. John Trumbull, for the purpose of drawing my picture." Under date of March 1st, he says: "Exercised on horseback this forenoon, attended by Mr. John Trumbull, who wished to see me mounted." Trumbull's aim in painting Washington, he says in his *Memoirs*, was "to preserve the *military* character of the great original. . . . In the countenance of the hero the *likeness*, the mere map of his face, was not all that was attempted"; his object was to give "the *high resolve* stamping on the face and attitude the lofty purpose to conquer or to perish." Whether, in the effort to render ideal expression, Trumbull departed from that strict accuracy of feature which would satisfy the realist, is an open question. His Washington differs from Charles Willson Peale's two portraits, one painted while Washington was in the English service, before the Revolution, and the other during the war, and also from Stuart's portrait, painted during Washington's Presidential term, for which this artist had sittings five years later than Trumbull, in 1795. It is quite certain that Stuart tried to render the expression which, in the words of Mr. W. S. Baker, author of *The Engraved Portraits of Washington*, "he knew must accord with such features and such a man." Trumbull did the same thing in relation to an earlier stage of life. The following extract from Tuckerman's *Character and Portraits of Washington* bears witness to the quality of the likeness. "Ask an elderly Knickerbocker what picture will give you a good idea of Washington, and he will confidently refer you to Trumbull's portrait. When Lafayette first beheld a copy of this picture on his visit to this country, in 1824, a few years before his death, he uttered an exclamation of delight at its resemblance."

Another portrait painted about this time, the full-length of Alexander Hamilton now in the Chamber of Commerce, New York, must be cited with the *Washington* as an equally fine work. Color, expression, attitude, character, and, above all, the bearing of a gentleman, signalize this painting among works of its class. Trumbull painted at least four more portraits of Hamilton, one in the possession of Hon. R. C. Winthrop, Boston, a second owned by Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, Boston, another in the possession of Mrs. Pendleton Hosack, New York, and still another now in the Yale School of the Fine Arts, New Haven.



SKETCH BY TRUMBULL.

THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.



SKETCH FOR THE DEATH OF MISS MACCREA.

FROM THE ORIGINAL BY JOHN TRUMBULL, IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

JOHN TRUMBULL.

SECOND AND CONCLUDING ARTICLE.

WE have reached the second period of Trumbull's career,—that which is marked by the change of style previously alluded to. The interest we now take in him is of political and social, rather than professional importance. The change of style may be accounted for in two ways,—one by various interruptions to the practice of his profession through political and other pursuits, and the other by a visual defect, which will be mentioned and accounted for farther on. Regarding the former, it is merely necessary to describe his career after finishing the paintings above referred to.

In 1794, Trumbull returned to England in company with Mr. Jay, who was appointed Envoy from the United States to Great Britain, to settle certain difficulties between the two countries, and to whom Trumbull acted as secretary. Before his departure he had been engaged in procuring subscriptions for the engravings he was to publish, then in progress, the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, the *Death of Montgomery*, and the *Sortie from Gibraltar*. Owing, however, to the excitement in the United States caused by the French Revolution, which seems to have divided the country into two parties, absorbing people's minds, and which blasted his hopes; he met with but little success. Meanwhile he painted a few portraits and other subjects. In England, on his services as secretary to Mr. Jay being no longer required, he resorted to commercial speculations, the motives for which, as well as his mental state, are set forth in the following extract from a letter to Mr. Wadsworth, at Hartford:—"I feel at times not a little anxiety on the subject of *picture-making*. I have by no means money enough to live comfortably without business of some sort. I hate your nasty, squabbling politics: they disgust me. I know nothing of farming, little of trade, and I fear that I shall find that my countrymen care very little for the only thing which I pretend to understand. But my doubts will soon be solved by the experiment,

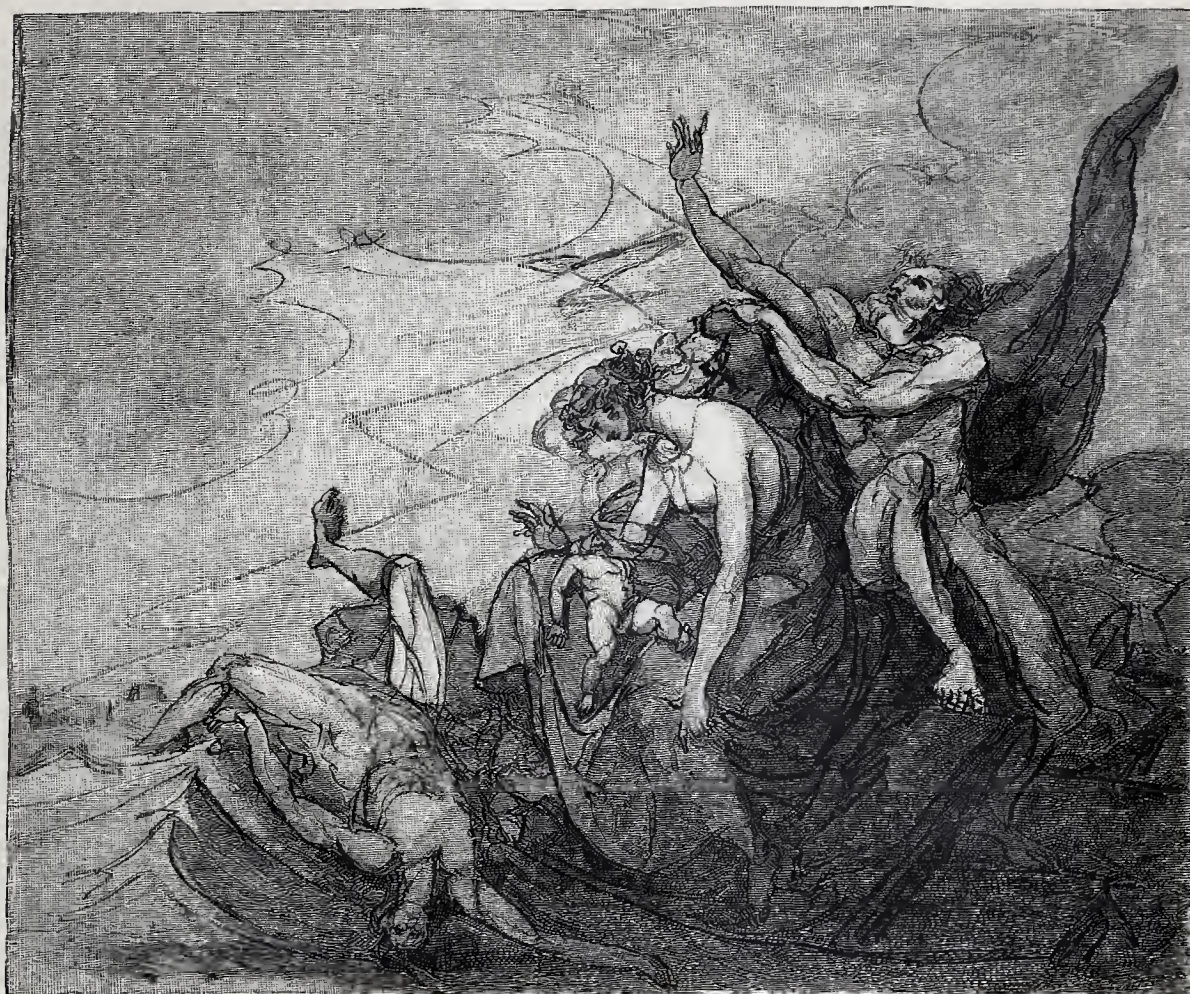
which, if favorable, will make me as happy a fellow as any in America. If otherwise, I must either turn hermit in my native woods, or wander in the wide world."

The experiment is the publication of the engravings after his pictures. The commercial speculations consisted of an investment in paintings, jointly with a Hamburg banker, named Le Brun, who furnished most of the capital, and of a similar speculation in brandy. The picture speculation proved unprofitable, owing to the pictures being damaged by water, while on board a lighter at the dock in London. "It was near low water, so the hands on board made the lighter fast with a chain to one of the posts for perfect security, and then went their way for a frolic. In the evening, when the tide came in, the bow of the boat being held down by the chain, she gradually filled, and my cases, being light, floated out. . . . I passed the remainder of the season in repairing, as well as I could, the damage they had sustained." The brandy speculation terminated about in the same fashion, owing to the wreck of the vessel on which a part of the venture was shipped, and to other commercial mishaps. In the mean time he visited Stuttgart, to look after the engraving of the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, then in the hands of Müller, as we see by Goethe's letter, and he passed some time in Paris on diplomatic business. In short, he was fighting the battle of life the best way he could. This brings us to 1796. That year Colonel Trumbull was appointed a United States Commissioner in London, to see to the execution of the treaty effected by Mr. Jay, which duty he performed with marked ability, the commission terminating in 1804. During this period he painted very little. In 1804 he returned home and resumed his brush. He now painted portraits, and again busied himself with obtaining subscriptions for the engravings and in completing the *Declaration of Independence*. In 1808 he returned to England, on account of political asperities which "threatened the entire destruction of commerce and the prosperity of those friends from whom I derived my subsistence." Here he pursued his profession for four years, under adverse circumstances. He executed a few large pictures, "also a number of portraits, for which good prices were paid, but not to an amount sufficient to defray expenses." The war of 1812 then broke out, which put an end to his professional career in England. Being an American, "the only indulgence I was able to obtain was permission to reside at Bath or Cheltenham, in preference to London." The three large pictures now to be seen in the collection at New Haven—*The Woman accused of Adultery*, *The Earl of Angus conferring Knighthood on De Wilton*, and *Our Saviour with Little Children*—were painted at this time. In 1816 he returned to his native land, never again to leave it. His last sojourn in England seems to have resulted in little more than trial, disappointment, and debt. Need one wonder that, with a mind harassed with cares and disturbed by other pursuits, his art underwent a change?

The visual defect which seems to account for the artistic decline so apparent in Trumbull's large works—the discrepancies of merit in these being so marked when compared with his small works—is purely physical. This is due to an accident at ten years of age, which made him almost blind in one eye. "The optic nerve," he says, "must have been severely injured, for although the eye recovered entirely its external appearance, yet vision was so nearly destroyed, that to this day (1835) I have never been able to read a single word with the left eye alone." Age, certainly, did not improve this infirmity. Trumbull by it was reduced to monocular vision, which disqualifies a man for seeing forms and proportions normally. The lack of an eye destroys an accurate perception of relief, preventing one from properly locating points in space; and a person with one eye cannot command as large a surface of canvas as one who has the use of both eyes.

However this may be, the inferiority of Trumbull's works after 1816, on his return home, is unmistakable. To this period belong the four large paintings in the Capitol at Washington by which Colonel Trumbull is generally estimated as an artist. These pictures, the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Surrender of Cornwallis*, the *Surrender of Burgoyne*, and *Washington resigning his Commission*,—the first and last being chosen from among his other national subjects because

significant of moral power, and the other two because the absolute triumph over the country's enemy denotes commanding military power, — are enlarged copies of the small originals at New Haven. No interest attaches to them as works of art. In connection with government patronage of art, however, as signs of the times, they point a moral.



THE DELUGE.

INDIA-INK SKETCH BY JOHN TRUMBULL. — ENGRAVED BY WILLIAM MILLER.

FROM THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF PROF. B. SILLIMAN, NEW HAVEN.

I give a summary of the debate in Congress which took place on the passage of the bill authorizing the commissioning of Colonel Trumbull to paint them.

The opponents of the measure, says the *National Intelligencer* of that day, deemed it questionable how far it was just or proper for the government of the United States to become the patron of the fine arts. It should not go to such expense until all its pecuniary obligations, every debt arising out of the war of the Revolution and of the war of 1812, had been paid. A nation should be just before it is generous. Congress might not like the paintings when they were done. Generally, in countries where painting and statuary in commemoration of liberty and great events had been brought to the highest perfection, this had no perceptible effect in preserving the liberty and independence of those nations, while rights and liberties depended on no such paltry conditions. In reply, it was argued that there was no idea of making the government the patron of the fine arts, otherwise than it already had been by employing artists to rebuild and embellish the Capitol (burnt by the British in the late war). The moral effect of these paintings would be of great value to the present and future generations, independent of their intrinsic worth, serving to recall to the attention of future legislators the events and principles of the Revolution, and to impel them to an imitation of the virtues of the men of those days. Now was the time, never to be found again, when a living artist of great ability, a compatriot of Revolutionary sages and heroes, could transmit accurate likenesses of them to posterity.

This last idea probably had weight. Whether or not sentiment prevailed over utilitarianism, it suffices to state that the measure was carried by a handsome majority. Fortunately for Colonel Trumbull, the leaders of both Houses were in his favor, while influential friends outside

of it, like Jefferson, men of sense and discretion, moving on a higher plane of intelligence, and able to control in those days the less developed understandings of their associates, ably seconded them. Had he been obliged to depend on his artistic deserts, to say nothing of his personal tact and energy, the enterprise would have failed. Thanks to Trumbull, a pioneer in developing government patronage of art in this country, the filling of the remaining panels in the Capitol became possible, twenty years later.

Colonel Trumbull was sorely tried by his country's legislators when endeavoring to procure subscriptions to the engraving of the *Declaration of Independence*. He then lived in New York, while his agent at Washington was a Mr. Dwight. He thus writes to him, under date of February 18th, 1818:—"I have written on the subject of your failure [to procure subscriptions] to Governor Barbour, Mr. King, and Mr. Fromentin, of the Senate, and to General Harrison, Governor Middleton, Mr. Hopkinson, and Mr. Pitkin, of the House of Representatives. . . . Wait on these gentlemen as soon as you receive this, and endeavor to engage their protection. Remember, this is a *logocracy*; you must talk. The Houses are now so numerous, and the tables of the members of both so constantly loaded with petitions, proposals, and applications of all sorts, that whatever is not supported by active and influential friends has no chance of success."

The following day he writes to David Daggett, Esq., Senate of the United States, as well as to each of the parties named in the above letter to Mr. Dwight. To Mr. Daggett he says:—"The utter failure of Mr. Dwight in the Senate . . . is inexplicable, unless it has arisen from my own want of precaution in not having furnished Mr. Dwight at first, soliciting their protection, letters to some gentlemen who, you know, *like to lead*. I did not expect every one to be a subscriber, but did expect some one would have followed the example of four Presidents; for to many of the Western and Southern members the price, or the advance required, can be no object. In truth, the work is offered at a lower price than any other publication in this country. The print will contain forty-seven portraits of our most eminent men, some of them whole-lengths, and will be executed in the finest style by the first engraver of the age,¹ so as to form within the frame an elegant monumental piece of furniture, at the average price of forty-two and a half cents for each head. . . . The heads of our junior naval and military heroes are published at from one to two and a half dollars each; and Binns is getting numerous subscribers for a mere verbal copy of the Declaration, at ten dollars, embellished, as he calls it, with flags, and State coat of arms, and four or five heads like the Christmas specimens of children of a writing school. I confess I do not yet understand my countrymen."

"I am not only mortified, but confounded," he adds in a letter of the same date to Rufus King. "In the year 1790 I pursued the same course here, and, although I was then comparatively unknown and the country relatively poor, I was honored in one day with the names of more than half the Senate, and in another, of more than half of the House of Representatives."

These items show what the artist had to contend with. At a later date a resolution was introduced into the House of Representatives to commission Colonel Trumbull to paint the capture of André, which was tabled.

Colonel Trumbull's artistic career may be considered as closed on the execution of these pictures for the Capitol. The *Battle of Bunker Hill*, the *Battle of Trenton*, the *Battle of Princeton*, and the *Death of Montgomery*, now in the Wadsworth Athenæum, Hartford, on a smaller scale, also copies of the originals at New Haven, commenced in 1832 and finished in that decade, show a still greater decline of his powers. But one head, that of Colonel Clinton in the background of the *Battle of Bunker Hill*, exhibits any sign of his original spirit. These pictures, with occasional portraits painted from time to time, ending with that of *Mrs. Sigourney*, also in this collection, simply display the flickering flame of his genius.

¹ At this time he supposed that the plate, afterwards engraved by Mr. Durand, would be engraved by Heath in England, as he had authorized negotiations to be made with him for that purpose.



Wm. Loring Quincy
N. H. J.

New York 20th Sept. 1828

Dear Sir

I have the honor to offer to the acceptance
of the Boston Athenaeum, a book containing what ~~Sketches~~
I ^{have} been able to collect, of those which were made for the
"picture of the Gibraltar": — together with a few observations
in writing, which I thought might at least gratify the
Curiosity of future Artists — perhaps be useful in enforcing
the necessity of unceasing Study and Labour, if they
aspire to eminence

I have the Honor to be Dear Sir

With high Respect & Esteem

Your obliged & faithful friend & servant

W. L. Quincy

Colonel Trumbull as an artist can be thoroughly appreciated only through his works at New Haven. Fine portraits by him, however, other than those already mentioned, are found in the Wadsworth Athenæum, Hartford (No. 132), and in the Historical Society building in New York. In the latter collection, *Bryan Rossiter*, Sergeant-at-Arms to the Cincinnati Society, painted in 1790, is a fine example of his early work, and *John Pintard*, one of his best friends, painted in 1816-17, is an admirable specimen of his later work. Two excellent portraits, one of his wife and one of *Christopher Gore*, the latter painted in 1804, hang in the New Haven gallery.

Colonel Trumbull painted rapidly, judging by a memorandum, found among his papers, of the portraits executed by him in New York, in 1806. According to this document, he produced twenty-four in five months, averaging five sittings to a head. His prices, which are given in this paper, were \$100 for the head alone, \$150 with the hands, and, in one case, portraits of father, mother, and two children on the same canvas, \$500. In this respect he stood on a par with Stuart. It is worth noting in this connection that Trumbull at first thought of settling in Boston, where he was well received on returning from Europe in 1804, but, finding that Stuart had been invited there from Washington, he came to the conclusion that Boston "did by no means offer an adequate field of success for two rival artists." He accordingly established himself in New York.

What remains to be recorded of Colonel Trumbull is purely biographical. At one time he busied himself with architecture, judging by a large number of architectural designs by him in the possession of Mr. A. J. Davis, New York. One of these is dated as early as 1775. The others appear to have been drawn in England, probably on his second visit. Edmund Burke, in 1784, strongly urged him to devote himself to architecture. "You belong to a young nation," he says to him, "which will soon want public buildings. These must be erected before the decorations of painting and sculpture will be required. . . . Qualify yourself to superintend their erection. Decorate them also, if you will." Trumbull had a hand in the reconstruction of the Capitol at Washington, after its destruction by the British in the war of 1812, as we see by his Memoirs, and also by the above-mentioned collection of architectural drawings, in which some of the plans he drew are preserved. He likewise planned the building for the American Academy of the Fine Arts, New York, which was built by his friend, Dr. Hosack.

In the local history of art, Colonel Trumbull's connection with the American Academy of the Fine Arts, and the part he played in opposing the formation of the National Academy of Design, are of interest. Full particulars of the strife are given in Dunlap's *History of the Arts of Design*, and in the *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design*, by T. S. Cummings. Both these writers were his antagonists. Dunlap, in his Life of Trumbull, carries his spite too far. It would pass for malice, were his statements not more amusing than convincing. In trying to convey the idea that Trumbull was ungrateful to his early friend and instructor, West, that he was more English than American at heart, and that in the treatment of his important battle subjects he was only commemorating the triumph of Great Britain, Dunlap overshot the mark. The truth is, that in his connection with the American Academy of the Fine Arts, of which he was one of the organizers and the President, Trumbull was trying to make water run up hill. The difficulty between him and the artists who seceded from that institution was not so much due to him as to a condition of things beyond his control. The plan of the American Academy comprised a permanent, as well as periodical exhibitions, lectures, schools, a library, and other agencies in art education, copied from a foreign model,—that of the not long established Royal Academy in England,—and not adapted to this country, or manageable by directors taken from the non-professional classes. The public of that time cared very little about art, there were few artists, and the judgment of stockholders, whose authority in the institution grew out of the money they paid for their shares, did not fulfil the same ends as the more intelligent patronage of a king and the support of a cultivated aristocracy. Colonel Trumbull was



THE SORTIE FROM GIBRALTAR.

PHOTOTYPIC FAC-SIMILE OF A PRELIMINARY PEN-AND-INK SKETCH BY JOHN TRUMBULL.

THE ORIGINAL IN THE POSSESSION OF THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM.

familiar with the foreign condition of things, and the mistake he made was in supposing that a kindred institution could be at once established in an entirely new country. The American Academy of Fine Arts, accordingly, is simply a forerunner of similar attempts that have utterly failed, or proved abortive through a similar misconception of means in relation to ends.

It is much more agreeable to turn to Colonel Trumbull's generous and more judicious encouragement of art in his recognition of the ability of young artists. He saw and purchased one of the first pictures which Cole exhibited in New York, declaring that "this youth has done what all my life I have attempted in vain." The venerable Robert W. Weir informs me that one of his early works, exhibited in the window of Michael Paff, the well-known picture-dealer of that day, was bought by Colonel Trumbull, who at the same time sent for him to make his acquaintance. Another proof of his liberal encouragement of the arts and of young artists is found in the engraving of the *Declaration of Independence*. This work, which involved an outlay of capital and loss of time that would have been serious had the engraving not proved satisfactory, he intrusted to Mr. A. B. Durand, a young man of twenty-six. The only sanction there was for intrusting so large and important a work to him was Colonel Trumbull's perception of his ability. Mr. Durand gratefully attributes his reputation as an engraver to Colonel Trumbull. It does not follow that Colonel Trumbull thought it best for his young friends to pursue art. New York in 1820 had no more become an Athens than Connecticut in 1783,—the days of "Brother Jonathan." Mr. Weir informs me that Colonel Trumbull recommended him to make shoes rather than be a painter, while, according to Mr. Frederic Depeyster, he told Mr. Page, then a lad of marked talent for drawing, to "go and saw wood." His friend and executor, Professor Silliman the elder, says, in the manuscript reminiscences of Colonel Trumbull by his hand: "He did not in general encourage young artists with any flattering hopes of brilliant success. His pictures of the life of an artist were rather deeply shaded, for he thought that the profession of a painter afforded but an uncertain reliance, and that the man of the palette and pencil might languish in comparative poverty, while many a proficient in the mechanic arts might rise to competence, if not to wealth."

This advice and this reflection, due to Colonel Trumbull's experience, were natural enough. He had had a hard time of it. Only his indomitable will secured for him the success he met with. And even this was not all, for he was aided by friends and relatives of wealth and influence. None of his speculations proved profitable. We have seen the result of his commercial undertakings, and the same result attended his artistic enterprises. The engravings he published, to which he devoted so much time, money, and labor, were wholly uncompensating, while his ordinary professional gains were on the whole not equal to his necessities. The \$32,000 he received from the United States government for the paintings in the Capitol at Washington sufficed simply to discharge a long series of obligations. "I had passed," he says, "the term of threescore years and ten. My debts were paid, but I had the world before me to begin anew." In 1832, Colonel Trumbull procured a pension on account of his military services, which, with the annuity from Yale College, secured to him by that institution for the paintings now in New Haven, enabled him to pass the remainder of his life in comfort.

Colonel Trumbull died in New York, November 10th, 1843, aged eighty-seven years and five months. He was buried in New Haven, beneath the gallery which bore his name, erected during his life under his supervision, and in which were deposited and arranged by him the pictures he made over to Yale College in accordance with the conditions of his annuity. At one end of it hung his full-length portrait of Washington; under this hung his own portrait, painted by Waldo and Jewett,—placed there after his death,—with that of his wife, painted by himself; while in the ground, under the floor, reposed their bodies. His directions in relation to his interment were, "Place me at the feet of my great master." When the Yale School of the Fine Arts was erected, the entire collection of paintings, as well as the remains of Colonel Trumbull and his wife, was transferred to that edifice. In the old building the pictures were



*The above Head was sketched in 1789, from Sir Thomas Lawrence, with whom I was then intimate; and who did me the honor to act as Model for my dying Spaniard; in the last picture
I have lately been told by Mr. Robert Gilmer, that St. Thomas informed him that He had never set for his portrait, except on this occasion to me:—this therefore may be regarded as an unique resemblance of the very eminent and estimable Man.*

advantageously placed, each with ample space around it, and all, if I am not mistaken, on the line. What is now needed is a similar arrangement. The least that could be done in honor of the artist who selected this beautiful town for his final resting-place would be to devote a part of the new building solely to his finished works, his sketches and engravings, with every souvenir of him that would make the collection a yet more perfect representation of the genius of a truly national old master.

There are five portraits of Colonel Trumbull:—one painted by himself in 1833, and engraved for his *Memoirs*; two by Waldo and Jewett, one in the possession of Professor Silliman, which is here reproduced, and the other in the Yale School of the Fine Arts; a small full-length by Twibill, in the possession of the National Academy of Design, New York; and one by Gilbert Stuart, owned by Mr. William Forbes Morgan, of New York. The portrait now in the Yale School of the Fine Arts was engraved by Mr. A. B. Durand, for the *National Portrait Gallery*, published by James Herring. During the progress of the engraving, Mr. Durand corrected a proof of it from life. A miniature of Colonel Trumbull by Robertson exists somewhere in England. A bust of him by Ball Hughes is in the Yale School at New Haven, and there is a medal of him issued by the American Art Union.

Colonel Trumbull's will, courage, independence, self-reliance, and enterprise are fully apparent in the foregoing details of his career; something more is necessary to complete our idea of him as a man. While Colonel Trumbull was sensitive, proud, of perfect integrity, a man of honor in the highest sense of the term, it must be also admitted that he was of an excitable and even passionate temperament, which often rendered him arbitrary and dictatorial in certain public relations. Never, however, was he uncourteous or unforgiving with anybody. These traits, as well as his urbanity and benevolence, can be demonstrated by many who knew him and still survive. Of superior intelligence, wide experience, noble in aspiration, and conscientious, he would defer only to those whom he knew to surpass him in these qualities. The best idea which can be given of him in social relations is, as usual, that which can be derived from his own language. The following letter shows in a general way the tone of his mind and judgment on important matters. It is written to a nephew concerning a profession.

“HAMMERSMITH, NEAR LONDON, Oct. 20, 1801.

“You ask my advice with regard to the profession you ought to pursue. From your own observations I presume that you have not, as I always had, a very strong predilection for any particular pursuit, and the question, therefore, is to be decided by prudence alone.

“Of the three professions, I think that of a physician least desirable in every respect, and therefore not to be thought of but by those in whose minds nature has impressed a love for it. To a serious mind, which looks to futurity, which considers this life but as a journey, and the good things of the earth but as the accommodations of the inns on the road, the duties of a clergyman must have charms; and, if entered upon with such sentiments, undoubtedly that profession will be found to afford in its humble and tranquil enjoyments more real happiness than the politician can ever find in the tumult of intrigue, or the merchant in the bustle of wealth and business; but it must be entered upon with sentiments of real piety and from considerations of duty,—not with the base view of procuring a livelihood; such as go into the pulpit with such motives only, in my opinion profane the holy place. Unless, therefore, you feel yourself strongly impressed with a persuasion that your duty calls you to this sacred employment, avoid it.

“In our country, and in all societies constituted on similar principles, the law is a sure road to honor and emolument for those who to talents add integrity and industry. The only objection I know to the profession is that it forces the mind upon a continual observation of the vices and follies of human nature. But there are two sides to every question; and the lawyer who studies as much as possible to defend innocence and to detect and punish crimes is certainly a most estimable and important member of society, while he who perverts his talents and his knowledge to the purposes of chicane and the protection of roguery is most pestilent. If you feel in yourself no aversion to the study of the law, if in your studies you have discovered any talent for public speaking and for composition, I would certainly, of the three learned professions, recommend the law. It is honorable: a virtuous man will render it very useful to society, and to an honest man it may with the purest integrity be rendered lucrative. Such are my sentiments, but judge for yourself, without suffering my opinions to control you. It is

your happiness that is at stake. Keep but one maxim ever in view as invariable, that industry, integrity, and perseverance will always lead to prosperity and happiness.

"When you have made your choice, be so good as to acquaint me, and send me a list of such books as you will most want, that I may have the pleasure of contributing something towards your success.

"With sincere affection, I am, my dear sir, your faithful friend and uncle,

"JNO. TRUMBULL."

Such were the men who laid the foundations of American character. I can only add, in conclusion, that Trumbull the artist is worthy to be named as the peer of his great friends and contemporaries, Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin, and entitled to be associated with them in the minds and memories of his countrymen.

JOHN DURAND.

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PRIVATE VIEW

OF THE

SORTIE OF GIBRALTAR.

The Bishop of Chester *party*

*is respectfully invited to a Private View of a Picture,
representing the SORTIE made by the Garrison of Gibraltar,
in November 1781, under the Orders of the late LORD
HEATHFIELD, at No. 31, Argyll-Street.*

W. Trumbull
Open every Day between the Hours of One and Five.

